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THE FORMATION OF THE CHALCIDIC LEAGUE

BY ALLEN B. WEST

Some years ago Swoboda¹ made the suggestion that the Chalcidian League was formed at the time of the revolt of Olynthos and Potidaea from Athens in 432. He based his hypotheses upon the narrative of Thucydides. The purpose of this paper is to present certain additional evidence, for the most part numismatic, and thereby to strengthen Swoboda's suggestions; I shall make use also of contemporary inscriptions. Before the Chalcidian coins can be used, however, they must be redated, and I shall devote considerable space to the discussion of this problem. It will be shown that the dates given by Head in his *Historia Numorum* are incorrect.

I need not touch upon the interesting question, recently raised by Harrison in an article in the *Classical Quarterly*,² as to who the Chalcidians were, whether they were colonists of Chalcis, as has been generally supposed, or whether they were a Greek tribe, in origin similar to the Bottiaeans. It will be sufficient to note that as early as the Persian Wars the Chalcidians seem to have acted as a unit in times of crisis. Herodotos³ informs us that τὸ Χαλκιδικὸν γένος furnished a contingent to the army of Xerxes. Likewise the historian's account shows⁴ that after the battle of Salamis, when Potidaea revolted from the king, the Chalcidians remained faithful to him and, as a reward for their loyalty, were presented with the city of Olynthos, which hitherto had been inhabited by Bottiaeans. Critoboulos of Torone was put in charge of this settlement. Comparing this with Thucydides⁵ we may assume that Torone was a Chalcidic city. Thus in 479 Olynthos came into the hands of the Chalcidians and this fact

¹ Swoboda, *Arch.-epigr. Mitth.*, VII, 1-59.

² E. Harrison, "Chalkidike," *Classical Quarterly*, 1912, 93 ff., 165 ff.

³ Hdt. vii. 185: περὶ δὲ τὸν Θρήικες παρίχοντο καὶ Παίονες καὶ Ἑορδοὶ καὶ Βοττιαῖοι καὶ τὸ Χαλκιδικὸν γένος κ. τ. λ.

⁴ Hdt. viii. 127: τὴν δὲ πόλιν παραδίδοι Κριτοβούλῳ Τοροναίῳ ἐπιτροπεύειν καὶ τῷ Χαλκιδικῷ γένει, καὶ οὕτω Ὀλυνθον Χαλκιδέες ἔσχον.

⁵ Thuc. iv. 110: εὐθὺς στρατεύει ἐπὶ Τορώνῃ τὴν Χαλκιδικὴν κατεχομένην ὑπὸ Ἀθηναίων.

found expression in the coins of the town which bear the inscription $\Lambda\downarrow$ upon the reverse.¹ Later coins of the same type replace this inscription with another that shows that they were coined at Olynthos. These coins substantiate the account given by Herodotos and show that a feeling of kinship and unity existed among the Chalcidians of Thrace as early as the beginning of the fifth century.

The settlement of Olynthos by colonists taken from a number of related Chalcidian cities no doubt served to strengthen the union of these cities and to give to Olynthos special importance. It would be natural for the Chalcidians to regard it as a common possession in which all had a part. In time it became the center of Chalcidian interests, around which a closer and more permanent union grew up. This explains the importance of the city during the Peloponnesian War and the readiness with which the smaller Chalcidian towns upon the coast gave up their homes and migrated to it.²

Our knowledge of the history of the Chalcidic peninsula during the fifth century until the Peloponnesian War is almost entirely confined to what may be gleaned from the Attic Quota lists, which are in a very fragmentary condition and do not commence until 454. It is noteworthy that in some of the earlier lists cities which later became identified with the Chalcidian League are found combined. For example in 454, Olynthos, Scabla, and Assera are placed together; Mecyperna and Stolos also made a joint contribution.³ In 445 mention is made of the Sermyleans and their *συντελεῖς*.⁴ Athenian policy, however, seems to have been directed against such incipient unions and in the later lists each city is credited with its individual contribution. The union of Olynthos with Scabla and Assera is of peculiar interest, for it is the first indication we have of a

¹ *Numis. Chron.*, 1897, 276, pl. XIII, 6; Head, *Hist. Num.*,² 208. The coin in question might have been referred to Chalcis if the obverse type had not contained the figure of a horse cantering, the sign of the city of Olynthos.

² Thuc. i. 58: καὶ Περδίκκας πείθει Χαλκιδέας τὰς ἐπὶ θαλάσῃ πόλεις ἐκλιπόντας καὶ καταβαλόντας ἀνοικίσασθαι ἐς Ὀλυνθον μίαν τε πόλιν ταύτην ἰσχυρὰν ποιήσασθαι.

³ I. G., I, 226. Ὀλυνθ [οι] Σκα Μεκυνερ[να]ῖοι
βλαῖο[ι] Ἀρσε Στόλαιοι [ῖοι] . . .
ρίται Η . . . Ε.

⁴ I. G., I, 235. Γ^H Σερμυλιῆς κα[ι] συν

union among the Chalcidic cities in which Olynthos was the central and moving figure. It was probably at the time when this union was dissolved that a change was made in the Olynthian coinage. The inscription $\begin{smallmatrix} \text{O}\Lambda \\ \text{N}\Lambda \end{smallmatrix}$ took the place of $\begin{smallmatrix} \Lambda\downarrow \\ \text{L}\text{K} \end{smallmatrix}$ which had been used heretofore.

In the years immediately preceding the Peloponnesian War more than forty cities of the Chalcidic peninsula were tributary to Athens. The richer and more important of them were situated upon the two peninsulas of Pallene and Sithonia. In comparison with these, Olynthos and the other cities of the base of Chalcidice were small and unimportant towns. Acanthos, the chief Andrian colony, and Spartolos, a Bottiaean city, both surpassed Olynthos in resources and importance.¹

We have now come to the point where Thucydides commences his history of the Peloponnesian War. It will be unnecessary to give a detailed account of the revolt of Potidaea except in so far as it was connected with Chalcidian troubles. The Attic Quota lists² indicate

¹ *I. G.*, I, 237, 239, 242, 243, 244, 259. If we take the lists for the years 443, 441, 437, 436, and 425 and compare the tribute of the various cities, we can come to a rough estimate of their relative importance. The following table, compiled from the lists of these years, shows how small Olynthos was when compared with its neighbors:

City	Year	Tribute in Talents	Year	Tribute
Aineia	438	3		
Acanthos	443	3	425	3
Mende	437	8	425	8
Olynthos	438	2		
Potidaea	436	15		
Sermyle	437	4½		
Spartolos	436	3½		
Scione	438	15	425	9
Torone	441	6	425	12

The combined tribute from the peninsula of Pallene was about forty talents, that of Sithonia about fifteen, and that of Acte about five. The combined territory of the three peninsulas was approximately one-third of the area of the base of the larger peninsula, which paid about twenty talents. Thus we see that Pallene nearly equaled the combined wealth of the remainder of Chalcidice, and that Olynthos was quite small at this time with its meager two talents of tribute. I hope to take up the question of population in another paper.

² *I. G.*, I, 242, 243, 244. In the year 436, Stageira, Stolos, Scione, Sermyle, Mende, Torone, and Aphytis paid no tribute. The tribute of Potidaea was raised from six talents in 438 to fifteen talents in 436. The tribute of Spartolos was also raised during this period from two to three and one-twelfth talents. In 437 about fifteen cities are found in the tribute lists for the first time, which shows the activity of Athens in the Chalcidic region.

that there had been considerable discontent about the time of the foundation of Amphipolis by Athens in 437. This resulted in a raised tribute for many cities. The final instigation to revolt was given by Perdiccas, king of Macedon.¹ He had good grounds for opposing the Athenians and for trying to weaken their power, for they had been consistently but secretly opposing him, now giving assistance to his rivals, now encouraging his subjects to revolt. With these grievances in mind he entered into negotiations with the discontented cities of the Chalcidian peninsula and offered them his alliance and support if they would throw off the Athenian yoke.

When Athens heard of these negotiations she commenced to take measures against them, commanding Potidaea to raze a part of its wall, to give hostages, and to sever connections with its mother city, Corinth. Potidaea protested, then prepared for revolt after receiving promises of aid from Corinth and Sparta. In the spring of 432 Athens sent a fleet to Potidaea to enforce her commands, but the fleet arrived too late. Potidaea had already revolted and had made an alliance with Perdiccas.² The Chalcidians and the Bottiaeans also revolted and joined this alliance. Perdiccas then persuaded the inhabitants of the small Chalcidic coast towns to migrate to Olynthos, and, in addition, he gave them a part of the land of Mygdonia for cultivation as long as the war should last.³

Thucydides tells us that an alliance was formed, including Potidaea, the Chalcidians, and the Bottiaeans, but he fails to mention the formation of the Chalcidic *κοινόν*. His narrative, however, shows that so far as external affairs were concerned the Chalcidians acted together and formed a distinct body. It is to be noted that his account of the revolt is as follows. The Potidaeans revolted with the Chalcidians and the Bottiaeans and swore an alliance with them. He speaks of the Chalcidians as he would speak of the Boeotians, and he makes no reference here to the individual cities. It is evident, moreover, that he uses the term Chalcidian in a limited sense, for there were Chalcidian cities that did not revolt at this time.⁴ The

¹ Thuc. i. 56 ff.

² Thuc. i. 57: *προσέφερε δὲ λόγους καὶ τοῖς ἐπὶ Θράκης Χαλκιδεῦσι καὶ Βοττιαίοις ξυναποστῆναι*; i. 58: *ἀφίστανται μετὰ Χαλκιδέων καὶ Βοττιαίων κοινῇ ξυνομόσαντες. καὶ Περδίκκας πείθει Χαλκιδέας κ. τ. λ.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Torone is a good example. See p. 24, n. 5.

natural inference is that a confederation of Chalcidic cities was formed then and that it is to this confederation that the term Chalcidian, as used by Thucydides in this and other passages, applies. We know that the official name of the league was approximately τὸ κοινὸν τῶν Χαλκιδέων.¹ Thus when Thucydides speaks of the Chalcidians, we must infer that he means the state and not the individual Chalcidian cities. If we consider the history of the war further, we shall see that the Chalcidians wage war as one people; that the army is almost without exception called Chalcidian;² that the Chalcidians by concerted action destroyed their sea-coast towns³ and strengthened Olynthos; that alliances and truces were made in the name of the Chalcidians as a body, and not in the name of the individual cities;⁴ that a Chalcidian proxenos was appointed for Thessaly;⁵ and that Chalcidian ambassadors were frequently sent out.⁶ There is a negative side to this evidence as well. The individual Chalcidian cities receive scant mention, so that it is evident that all foreign relations were in the hands of the league. We hear of no Olynthian treaties, and of no Olynthian ambassadors and proxenoi. The presumption is strong that the Chalcidians at the time of the revolt formed a close confederation, similar perhaps to that existing in Boeotia. I shall not attempt to give a more detailed consideration of Thucydides in this place, for it is my purpose to show that we are not dependent upon Thucydides alone for this period of Chalcidian history.

It is established, then, that an alliance was formed including Potidaea, the Chalcidians, and the Bottiaeans. That this alliance culminated in a close union is attested by certain contemporary coins. It has long been known that many of the cities of the Chalcidic peninsula altered their system of coinage at the time of their revolt from Athens. Until 432 the Attic standard was in common use in a great majority of the cities of this region, but this soon gave way to

¹ *I. G.*, II, 17, 105. Dittenberger, *Sylloge*², 77.

² Thuc. i. 62; ii. 79; iv. 7, 123, 124; v. 6-10. In the different passages the Chalcidians are distinguished from the contingents of the other allied cities such as Acanthos, e.g., *ibid.*, iv. 124: Χαλκιδέας καὶ Ἀκανθίους καὶ τῶν ἄλλων κατὰ δύναμιν ἐκάστων.

³ Thuc. i. 58.

⁵ Thuc. iv. 78.

⁴ Thuc. i. 58; v. 30, 31, 80; vi. 7.

⁶ Thuc. iv. 79, 83, 84; v. 38.

the Phoenician standard, then in use in Macedon. Macedonian influence had been a powerful factor in bringing about separation from Athens, and Macedonian trade was growing more important. Hence the change from the Attic standard to the one used by Macedon was a natural one for the Chalcidians to make as soon as possible after the revolt. According to the hitherto accepted classification of the Olynthian coin series,¹ neither the city Olynthos nor the Chalcidian League adopted the Phoenician standard until the first decade of the fourth century. This classification, however, is based upon the supposition that the Chalcidian League did not come into existence until after the Peloponnesian War. We should naturally expect Olynthos, however, to have been one of the first to adopt the new standard, and as the leader of the Chalcidians in their revolt against Athens it had need of money for carrying on the war. It is obvious that this was no time for a suspension of coinage.² Laying aside these probabilities, we have other reasons for asserting that the Chalcidians commenced their new coinage about the year 432. This new coinage, struck upon the so-called Phoenician standard, had for its obverse type the head of Apollo laureate, and for its reverse a cithara. There were at least three other states, the Bottiaeans, Arnae, and Acanthos, that adopted these same types.³ Head says that these coins are contemporary with the early Chalcidian coins of the same type, but he places them all in the fourth century. It is clear that this uniformity of coinage could not have existed unless

¹ Head, *Hist. Num.*, 208 f.

² No other important city of the peninsula, except those actually destroyed or captured by Athens, suspended coinage during the war. In the years 424-423, or thereabouts, Acanthos, Torone, and Mende adopted the Phoenician standard. Amphipolis and Aphytis commenced their coinage about the same time, making use of the same standard. Potidaea, Torone, and Scione were the only cities to suspend coinage. This is explained by the fact that Potidaea was deprived of its inhabitants and made an Athenian colony early in the war; Torone was captured by Cleon in 422 and its defenders were taken prisoners to Athens; Scione was destroyed two years later; its inhabitants were put to the sword, and its territory was given over into the hands of the Plataeans. It is very probable, then, that as Olynthos and the Chalcidians set the example of revolt from Athens, so they were the first to adopt the Phoenician standard.

³ *B. M. C., Maced.* Acanthos, p. 36, nos. 40, 41.

Arnae, p. 62, no. 1.

Bottiaeans, p. 63, nos. 2, 3.

Chalcidians, p. 87, no. 5.

there had been a close political alliance between the states issuing the coins, such as we find for example about the same time between Rhodes, Ephesos, Iasos, Cnidos, and Byzantion.¹ Therefore, we can assign these coins only to a period in which Bottiaea, Acanthos, and the Chalcidians were on very intimate and friendly terms. This was not the case in the early years of the fourth century. We have a treaty² of about the year 390 between the Chalcidians and Amyntas, king of Macedon. From this we know that the Chalcidians were at war with Acanthos and the Bottiaeans. This hostility, as we learn from Xenophon,³ was due to the comprehensive plans that the Chalcidians were making for the expansion of their league. Neither the Bottiaeans nor the Acanthians were willing to become members of this league. Acanthos was an Andrian colony, situated on the east coast of the Chalcidic peninsula, and may have attempted to exercise hegemony over the Andrian colonies or, perhaps, to unite them as the Bottiaeans and the Chalcidians had been united.⁴ There is some slight evidence that these were her aims soon after her revolt to Brasidas in 424. In any case she could not suffer with patience Chalcidian possession of strategic points in her immediate neighborhood. Thus when the Chalcidians became masters⁵ of Thyssos in 420 and Dion in 417, towns situated upon the peninsula of Acte, Acanthos began to feel jealousy of the growing power of the Chalcidian League. This jealousy became acute soon after the Peloponnesian War and continued until after the defeat of the Chalcidians by Sparta in 379. Thus it is impossible to conceive of any close alliance between Acanthos and the Chalcidians during this period.

As for the Bottiaeans, they enrolled themselves among the Athenian allies in 420, at the time of the peace between Athens and Sparta.⁶ The Bottiaeans were close neighbors of the Chalcidians on the west. They had formed a loose confederation, as an inscription and coins testify,⁷ and looked askance at the growth of the Chalcidian

¹ Hill, *Historical Greek Coins*, nos. 32 f.

² Dittenberger, *Sylloge*², 77.

³ Xen. *Hell.* v. 2. 11 ff.

⁴ The Bottiaeans had a common coinage and made a joint treaty with Athens in 420 (*I. G.*, I, 52, 53, Supp. p. 142).

⁵ Thuc. v. 35, 82.

⁶ See note 4, above.

⁷ See above.

League. As in the case of Acanthos they were at war with the Chalcidians¹ about 390 but were conquered² very soon after. Thus we can date the beginning of the breach between the two states definitely in 420, when the Bottiaeans accepted the terms of the peace and became Athenian allies. The Chalcidians were at war with Athens for several years, at least, after this date.

Finally, the coins that indicate an alliance between the Chalcidians and the Bottiaeans must have been struck before the year 420 and after the revolt in 432. Having seen that these coins belong to the first decade of the war, we can have no hesitation in connecting them with the alliance which Thucydides says was concluded between these two states. The fact that they adopted common coin types is an indication that the alliance was very close indeed, and the further fact that the coins were struck upon the standard in use in Macedon points to the influence of Perdiccas and, consequently, to a date before about 410, when the Macedonians gave up the use of the Phoenician standard. It had been largely because of the efforts of Perdiccas that the revolt had taken place. The Bottiaean state and the Chalcidians were the first members of this monetary alliance. Acanthos must have joined soon after 424 when it revolted to Brasidas.³ The fourth state to adopt this coinage was the little place of Arnae. Thucydides does not tell of its revolt, but he mentions it as a Chalcidic town⁴ in the winter of 424-423.

This monetary league can not have continued for any length of time.⁵ The coins that have come down to us are few and small in value, a silver tetrobol from Olynthos, silver obols from Acanthos and Arnae, and copper coins from the Bottiaeans. The league had been formed in direct opposition to Athenian power, and when once the purpose of the league had been gained, viz., freedom from the

¹ Dittenberger, *Sylloge*², 77.

² Isaacs, v. 42; cf. Jebb, *Attic Orators*, II, 354.

³ Thuc. iv. 84-88.

⁴ Thuc. iv. 103.

⁵ The gradual separation of Chalcidic and Bottiaean interests is shown by a copper coin of Bottiaea having the cithara upon the reverse, but for the obverse the head of Artemis instead of that of Apollo. The next step was the rejection of the cithara for the reverse type and the adoption of the figure of a bull. We have a bronze coin of Pausanias, king of Macedon, which seems to have been struck upon a coin of this type. This must date before 390 (Imhoof-Bl., *Monn. gr.*, p. 66, no. 6; *B. M. C.*, Maced., p. 63, nos. 1 and 4).

burdens imposed by Athens, and when the Bottiaean became reconciled with the latter state, there was no bond strong enough to hold it together. Thus about 420 the union was dissolved. The Bottiaeans and Acanthians maintained their independence against the advance of the Chalcidian power, but Arnae probably succumbed and became incorporated in the Chalcidian state.

What bearing has the foregoing upon the origin of the Chalcidian League? In the first place we have shown that the Apollo series of Chalcidian coins was first issued about 432. It has generally been conceded that this series formed a league coinage. Although the mint was at Olynthos, the coins were not, properly speaking, the coins of that city. This is shown by the fact that all of the old Olynthian types were laid aside in favor of one that had a more general application.¹ The name of the city, moreover, gave way to that of the league. Upon the reverse of the new coins the inscription XAAKIΔEΩN occurred. Upon the obverse of one of these coins is the inscription OAYNΘI.² This coin is to be placed at the beginning of the series before the city had become entirely identified with the league. The name of the city soon disappeared and was never replaced upon the coins. Therefore, since the Apollo series of Chalcidic coins had its beginning about 432, and since it was distinctly the coinage of the Chalcidians and not merely of the city of Olynthos, we must infer that there was a Chalcidian state at this early date. A consolidated currency is one of the surest signs of a close political union between states that have been hitherto autonomous, and the fact that at that time there was this distinct Chalcidic coinage proves conclusively that the feeling of unity among the Chalcidians had crystallized into actual union in the administration of internal affairs.

¹ Thuc. i. 118. The account given by Thucydides in this passage is worthy of consideration here. We are told that the Delphian god gave his sanction to the war and promised to side with the Spartans. Without doubt the Chalcidians were acquainted with this oracle. Their representatives had been in Corinth and in Sparta about that time. After the revolt had broken out and the Chalcidians had decided to adopt a new coinage, what more satisfactory coin type was to be found than the image of the god under whose protection they imagined themselves to be fighting? Amphipolis also adopted an Apollo coin type. It is at least possible, then, that there is some connection between the oracle given at Delphi and the adoption by the Chalcidians and their neighbors of the Apollo type for their new coinage.

² *B. M. C.*, Maced., 87, no. 5. Head, *Hist. Num.*,² 208.

Thus within the larger and less stable monetary union, we find a confederation of Chalcidic towns headed by Olynthos. We have seen traces of the beginnings of union during the days when the Athenian supremacy was at its height. Just as the colonies of Chalcis in the west acted together as a unit in times of crises so those upon the northern peninsula never lost that feeling of kinship which seems to have distinguished the Chalcidian colonies. In Chalcidice the Chalcidians had common interests, and all things seemed to favor the formation of a state out of the autonomous Chalcidian towns. Hostility to Athens gave them the first impulse and this was the bond that held them together during the war. Olynthos had been settled, not quite fifty years before, by joint action of the Chalcidians. Now at the suggestion of Perdiccas it was strengthened by the demolition of many of the smaller sea-coast towns, whose citizens removed to the inland city. Thus Olynthos became the natural rallying-point of the Chalcidians and the capital of the league.

The fact that the inhabitants of the smaller towns were so willing to remove to Olynthos, destroying their old homes and leaving all that to a Greek was so dear, the political autonomy of his *πόλις*, shows conclusively that the tie between the Chalcidians in the neighborhood of Olynthos was generally recognized, and was stronger than a mere feeling of relationship. That is to say, it culminated about this time in actual union.

It is impossible to state with certainty what towns were destroyed or how many of the Chalcidians joined the newly organized league. Such places in the immediate vicinity of Olynthos as Stolos, Mecyperna, Assera, and Singos were probably among its members.¹ As the revolt became more general, a larger portion of the Chalcidic peninsula was included in the territory governed by the new Chalcidian state.

We have the coins to show that there was a union among certain Chalcidian towns during the first years of the Peloponnesian War, and this is substantiated by the account that Thucydides gives of operations in Chalcidice. As I have said, a careful reading of Thucydides shows that, so far as external affairs were concerned, the Chalcidians acted together and formed a distinct body. The word

¹ See Swoboda's article, cited above.

ΧΑΛΚΙΔΕΩΝ upon the coins shows that this was the official name of the state. Thus when Thucydides uses the same term we must infer that it connoted for him the Chalcidian state and not the Chalcidian race. For example, Torone was a Chalcidic city, and yet Thucydides seems carefully to have distinguished the Toronaeans from the Chalcidians. In Thucydides, moreover, Chalcidice includes only that part of the peninsula which was in actual possession of the league. It did not include the territory of Chalcidian cities that remained faithful to Athens.

Thucydides makes it clear that the Chalcidians managed their affairs as one people. The coins prove that the administration of internal affairs had been consolidated. Thus we have only to combine the information given by these two sources and we see that the Chalcidic *κοινόν* was formed about the time of the revolt of the Chalcidians from Athens in 432.

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